



# CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

A Magazine Devoted to Cultural Rights,  
Neighborhood, Ecology and Arts Activism

## Artists & Community Organizers: Possibilities for Partnerships

by Thomas Tresser

*This article was submitted by Tom Tresser, a long time ACD member from Chicago. It is important because it gives us a snapshot of how one community is using the arts as a tool for urban revitalization.*

*This strategy is becoming increasingly popular as policy makers begin to realize the vital social role of the arts. More often than not our cultural institutions have left low income communities off their agenda. Now communities are developing arts programs that are responsive to their needs from the grassroots. We will continue to explore this phenomenon in future issues of Cultural Democracy.*

I have recently joined the staff of People's Housing, a 17-year-old nonprofit community development organization located in Rogers Park.

Peoples Housing creates affordable rental and cooperative housing and trains residents to manage their buildings. We also conduct a number of community organizing activities such as creating block clubs, community policing, youth activities and local school reform.

I was hired to be Director of Cultural Development and helped organize a community arts program for north Rogers Park. The keystone of this program is the 75-year-old Howard Theater, which we are renovating into the Howard Theater Culture Center.

People's Housing believes that the arts are a vital part of a community's infrastructure, both in a physical and spiritual sense.

Over the past six months, I have been learning from the developers and organizers on staff at Peoples Housing and I think there are some very exciting possibilities for collaboration between artists and agents of community change.

### WHAT IS COMMUNITY ORGANIZING?

The way I see it, community organizing means getting people together who share some common interest or condition to improve their lives by some type of shared action. This action is grass roots in nature and is aimed at some entity or person that can either make the desired change or is in the way of the desired change.

Community organizing, in the words of the Midwest Academy, a training center for organizers, is about building personal relationships with people, to change the world and how people act together.

*Continued on page 4*

### In this issue:

People's Housing

Sweetgrass Hills

Cultural  
Environment

Book Reviews

ACD Updates

UDC Conference

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## CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

means that culture is an essential human need and that each person and community has the right to a culture or cultures of their choice; that all communities should have equitable access to the material resources of the commonwealth for their cultural expression; that cultural values and policies should be decided in public debate with the guaranteed participation of all communities; and that the government does not have the right to favor one culture over another.

### THE ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

supports community cultural participation. We believe in cultural pluralism, and understand the necessity to integrate the struggles for cultural, political, and economic democracy in the United States. The most important initiatives for cultural democracy take place on a grassroots level in the communities, neighborhoods, and among activist artists and other progressive cultural workers.

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The Alliance for Cultural Democracy is the only national network of progressive and community based artists, activists and cultural workers. Members of ACD share the understanding that culture is an inalienable right, and that political and economic democracy cannot exist without cultural democracy - the right of all peoples to create and preserve their own culture.

Visions of ecological sustainability, peace and social justice are at the core of our personal and communal lives, and they cannot be achieved without the sustenance of art and culture. Through work in diverse arenas, forms and media, members of ACD have committed themselves to cultivating a more humane, beautiful and just society.

Since 1976, when it began as the Neighborhood Arts Programs National Organizing Committee (NAPNOC), ACD has enabled cultural activists to share news and new ideas, arrange tours, organize study groups, receive feedback on their work, meet new collaborators, and overcome their sense of isolation. At the regional and national level, ACD

works to forge closer ties with other activist organizations, and to build an effective public voice on issues of cultural policy.

As a member of the Alliance you will:

- Have access to Arts Wire, a national computer network devoted exclusively to the arts. This network will provide you with "up-to-the-minute" information on grants, shows and other opportunities, as well as allow you to interact with people around the country.
- Receive a subscription to *Huracan*, and *Cultural Democracy*,
- Receive member's discounts at ACD Regional and National conferences, a source of inspiration for hundreds of activists from the U.S. and abroad.
- You have the opportunity to take part in the governance of ACD. The Alliance is a membership run national collective. Through your contribution of dues and labor, you can help build a movement for cultural democracy.
- You will have the opportunity to initiate your own projects. □

## ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(membership and donations are tax deductible)

Individual membership \$25  \$40  \$100

Organizational membership

Contribution

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone : (home) \_\_\_\_\_

(work) \_\_\_\_\_

Organizational affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a check or money order, payable to the Alliance for Cultural Democracy, to PO Box 7591, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

# Note from the Editor



Welcome to the second, or for many of you the first, new *Cultural Democracy Magazine*. There has been some discussion as to if this is a newsletter or magazine. Please let me know what you think, and of the direction we are going with this publication. Get involved by sending us news of your work, both visual and written. A special nudge to all those past and present members - this is your publication!

These are exciting and very challenging times for cultural workers. While in many ways we have our backs against the wall, our work has never been more crucial. We are helping not only to revitalize our cities and defend our cultural rights, but to nurture the hearts and imaginations of all living things.

The CD collective is currently helping to publish the long overdue Membership Directory. (See the questionnaire below for a last call for 1994 entries.) As I read through the questionnaires two things really stuck out. One is that we all have a real need, based perhaps in survival, to network. We need each other! The other is that we are not only community-based cultural workers, but that our work is

issue-based. It is infused with issues addressing peace, justice, treaty rights, women, the environment, Latin America, Asia and Africa, health care, elderly, youth, disadvantaged, etc. ACD continues to be one of the few national networks of cultural activists working in this direction.

Of late I have found myself in the middle of the night browsing over old NAPNOC (Neighborhood Arts Programs National Organizing Committee, ACD's old name) records. While reading, I couldn't help but feel that there is a symbolic passing on of the torch within ACD. I felt a sudden sense of responsibility, all these ideas, information, strategy. Those of us who are a little younger are faced with entering into the world of community arts/ cultural work with little or no base of support. CETA funds are long gone. We are left to earn wages in the ever growing "temp market" (50% of all new jobs in the last four months have been temporary). In some ways this forces us to become more creative, using traditional grassroots organizing techniques. The fall-back is that many of my generation simply don't see

the arts as playing a vital role in social change. Not to mention that the history of the movement towards cultural democracy is, quite frankly, not being passed on. ACD and its members have been some of the few dependable and nurturing exceptions. My point is that, even without funding, this work continues, underlining the inherent need in society to "celebrate imagination." We give people the hope and confidence needed to revision their homes and communities, to laugh, dance and feel, as we struggle.

I want to share these ideas to encourage you to become more actively involved with, and to use the *Cultural Democracy Magazine* as tool for dialogue.

And finally, I would like to encourage all of you to consider giving a little extra to the *Cultural Democracy Magazine* to help us get through this transition period. Our goal is to publish CD quarterly, and an annual Membership directory. We need the help of all of you to realize this goal!

I hope to hear from you soon.

Michael Schwartz

## Membership Directory Questionnaire (Due April 17, 1994 for 1994 Edition)

All members will be listed in, and receive a Membership Directory. The following information is for the directory. If you choose not to fill out the following section you will be listed by name, phone and address only.

1. In 50 words or less, please describe your work. (Use additional paper if necessary.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How do you define yourself? (Circle all that are appropriate.) Actor, Arts Administrator, Community Center Rep, Cultural Organizer, Dancer, Educator, Film maker, Funder, Healer/ Counselor, Journalist, Media Artist, Muralist, Musician, Painter, Performance Artist, Photographer, Poet, Political Organizer, Presenter, Publisher, Puppeteer, Radio Worker, Sculptor, Storyteller, Writer, Video Artist, Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Your primary constituency? \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Primary issues of focus: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Organizational affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Any other skills, resources or services that you want other members to be aware of? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What connections are you seeking that will aid in your work? \_\_\_\_\_

It is about getting people together who have no apparent power to act together to improve their lives and their neighborhoods.

This can be done by getting existing institutions to make the desired improvement, or to get existing resources that affect a neighborhood reallocated for neighborhood improvement or by collaborative efforts to create the needed resources at the neighborhood level.

Organizing activities and strategies depend upon the goals being sought and the target person or organization which can make the desired changes. One type of strategy which is practiced extensively in Chicago is referred to as direct action organizing.

"Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990's" by long time organizers Kim Bobo, Steve Max, and Jackie Kendall (all associated with the Midwest Academy) identifies three principles of direct action organizing. 1) Win real, immediate, concrete improvements in people's lives. 2) Give people a sense of their own power. 3) Alter the relationships of power.

Today in Chicago, people are organizing to keep our public schools open and effective. We are working to create safe neighborhoods, build affordable and locally controlled housing, leverage jobs for young people and the under employed, ensure plant and worker safety, clean up toxic commercial sites and keep public transportation available for all citizens. These are just a few examples.

## HOW ARTISTS AND ARTS EVENTS CAN HELP

1. Putting together a community arts event. Using residents as volunteers and as talent is a positive and exciting action, around which to bring people together and build a volunteer base.

People's Housing recently produced a two day Howard Theater Family Arts Festival in the lobby of the Howard Theater. This was two days of live music, dance and performance showcasing cultures from around the world. Over 100 volunteers from Rogers Park



Photo by Carolyn Prieb

*Inkã Native Americans perform at first Howard Theater Family Arts Festival, Sept. 11-12, 1993, produced by People's Housing*

pitched in to pull off this event.

2. Community arts projects help to develop community talents and skills, encouraging people's creative powers and leadership abilities.

We constructed a community arts survey over three weeks. A team of seven residents from north Rogers Park were trained in survey and interviewing techniques and they helped our staff draft a survey questionnaire which was then taken in to the streets.

1,080 people told surveyors what

**The limits of tyrants  
are prescribed by the  
endurance of those  
whom they oppress.  
Frederick Douglass,  
1849**

kinds of activities they wanted to see in the Howard Theater. Over 450 people said they would like to help the community arts program in some way. More importantly, they were asked what skills and talents they possessed. People were surprised and pleased at this part of the

survey. Results of this survey will be a strong guide for our programming choices.

The single most popular type of activity was street fairs and festivals, with 57% of those surveyed checking that category. After that, 48% said they wanted dance, 48% programming for children, 47% rap events, and 45% listed theater events. We will start to build programs in these areas to reflect what we have learned.

These findings suggest that a community chorus, dance class, and a photography program would be very popular.

As an extra bonus, several members of the survey team became experts at soliciting opinions and programming needs. They will be hired as part time producers to help organize the very projects they helped call forth, via the survey process.

3. Arts events bring people together in a safe, public place where they share experiences and meet the organizing host group.

Over 600 people attended the Family Arts Festival. Members of our staff sat at information tables and gave out information about our community arts

*Continued from page 4*

and cooperative housing programs. For the two days of the festival the streetscape in front of the Howard Theater was transformed into a music-filled public square. Families, young and old lingered about, watching performances and chatting beside the outdoor information tables.

4. The arts can help people voice their concerns and help communicate complex issues and enable them to visualize solutions to problems.

We believe that over time our community arts programs — through on going classes, workshops and performances, and cultural enterprises, involving our neighbors — will help people to re-imagine their neighborhoods and their own lives. More immediately, People's Housing is planning to use the arts to assist in its other program areas. We are planning to produce a short video that explains how our cooperative housing program works. We would like to use Roger Park video artists, and members of our existing coop, to explain how the process works and the feelings of owning your own home. We are currently renovating two future co-op buildings that will have 62 units. These will be available to families on a rent to own basis.

5. Artists help "release" pent-up community creativity while helping build new opportunities for themselves by sharing their skills with community members.

We have established an Artists Committee of Rogers Park visual artists. They created a temporary gallery on the first floor of a building we are renovating as our future offices. Local artists were invited to display work during the Family Arts Festival. This committee is discussing future projects, including life model-



Photo by Thomas Tresser

*Howard Theater, Rogers Park, Chicago*

ing, workshops for young people and a Rogers Park studio tour.

We would like this to be a model for establishing collaborative projects with Rogers Park artists from other disciplines. We envision a mix of exhibits,

**Art is not a mirror  
held up to reality, but  
a hammer with which  
to shape it.  
Bertolt Brecht**

classes, mentoring situations with young people, and marketplace opportunities for selling work.

We feel these programs will help our neighbors to meet their neighbors who are artists and learn about what they can do, and we feel that Rogers Park artists will be put in closer touch with their community—a winning situation for everyone.

6. The arts offer creative techniques to enhance community organizing groups' internal capacity.

The executive director of Peoples Housing is very interested in applying creative processes to the non-arts work of the organization. We will be experimenting with improvisational techniques, game playing, public speaking, song, drawing and mini-play acting to improve our internal communications, brainstorming, problem solving, and public presentations.

7. Finally, artists can help the work of community-based organizing efforts by participating as volunteers, board members and resources for communication and fund raising projects.

Chicago is considered to be the birthplace of modern community organizing. Our city is a city of neighborhoods which reflect the cultures and visions of heritages from around the world. Artists and arts groups are found in every neighborhood. As Chicago faces a new century, it is appropriate to ask how we can bring these forces together to solve problems, build our communities and increase the peace.

For more information write Thomas Tresser, Director of Cultural Development, Peoples Housing, 1607 W. Howard St. #207, Chicago, IL 60626 (312)262-5900. □

# An Open Letter from Darrell Johnson and the Late Bill Stroud

Dear ACD members,

After the recent passing of our comrade and loved one Bill Stroud, we, the board of ACD, have been engaged in the rather difficult task of sustaining the organization in the absence of Bill's leadership. I think that I speak for the rest of the board in stating that Bill's death is a monumental challenge for those of us that are left here to carry on his ideas, belief and hope for a just and democratic world, free from oppression and imperialist dogma.

There has been much discussion on the part of the board as to what action and course of direction will be taken from here. On Nov. 17 and 18 the board scheduled a face-to-face meeting in Manhattan. At that time I agreed to take on the role as chair of the organization. I gladly take this challenge because I feel that it is the best and most meaningful tribute to Bill and all those who share his dreams and vision for the health of our social-cultural environment both nationally and globally.

I would like to share with you the many things that Bill and the board have worked on in an effort to continue as an organization, that reflects a rich history of working for cultural democracy; establishing principles and ideals representative of its great potential for present and future impact on our greater society.

I felt it important that Bill inform you of the recent crucial and important changes that will effect the future of ACD in a most positive way. The following is an unpublished letter to the membership from Bill before his untimely death:

Dear ACD Members,

We apologize for any of the past problems that you may have experienced with ACD. Since the early 80s we have not had a national office, regular paid staff, internship programs, or regional structure. It is very difficult to sustain a national organization, without all of the aforementioned, on a regular basis. We are pleased to announce some exciting changes within ACD that have been

long awaited! We thank you for your patience and look forward to your feedback, participation and new ideas. We have now embarked upon a new course to bring this exciting organization into the 21st century!

You may recall that a little over a year ago a systematic survey was done of the members to inquire what they wanted from ACD. Among the things indicated were better communications and more benefits such as health insurance. At the ACD 1992 National Conference in Atlanta, we voted to improve organizational communications and pursue the possibility of health benefits for members. Since that time the national board has implemented three infrastructural changes:

(1) Creation of *Cultural Democracy Newsletter*, a simple cost-effective quarterly newsletter sharing news and information for members. Send in your announcements, ideas, artwork, etc.

(2) User Group participation in Arts Wire, an on-line computer information service that has hot news items, funding information and user group participation. The system is accessible by MAC or IBM with a modem. This service is already in place and available to ACD'ers. Our E-MAIL address is ACD@tmn.com.

(3) Health Insurance. Through the National Association of Socially Responsible Organization (NASRO) and an affiliate relationship with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), members can receive medical, dental, and optical benefits through group coverage. This is a national plan, not limited by states, and costs vary from state to state. You pay your own premium.

These are just a few of the things we have been working on to improve. In each newsletter we will update you on improvements. Thanks again for your patience, suggestions and criticism. We are working to improve our situation and will strive onwards as we all work

towards a democratic culture.

Sincerely,

William Stroud

Chair, Board of Directors:

I take great pleasure to announce that the board's hard work under the leadership of Bill Stroud has paid off and now these ideas and projects have moved from the abstract to the real. As the interim chair, I call on my fellow board members and the general membership to help and guide me in this most important task, as I envision a model of its call for cultural democracy. It takes each and every one of us to be involved and dedicated in those things that we believe are just, necessary and downright important, because once we establish our individual beliefs we can then further involve ourselves in establishing, maintaining and defining the dynamics of this organization. Due to this collective will, we must submit that the organization will be ever-changing and ever-growing as it has a most important function. The above ideas and information from Bill as well as what we have submitted to you is just a small step in the giant leap for all of us desirous of working towards the future. I am extremely excited by my new role in ACD and look forward to building on its strong foundation.

Peace,

Darrell Johnson

Interim Chair, Board of Directors

Per wishes of his family and friends, the 509 Cultural Center is starting the William Stroud Fund. Donations may be made payable to: 509 Cultural Center c/o William Stroud Fund 1007 Market Street San Francisco, CA 94103 415/ 255-5971

These donations will go directly towards publishing *24 Hours*, by William Stroud. Condolences or correspondence may be sent to the 509 Cultural Center for forwarding to family members.

# SWEETGRASS HILLS FACE DESTRUCTION FOR PROFIT

By Sal Salerno

"This is holy ground, like Jerusalem -- it is holy land, these are sacred mountains, Indian sacred mountains," Pat Chief Stick, Chippewa Cree elder, told those gathered at the pipe ceremony that opened the Blackfeet encampment in the Sweetgrass Hills. The encampment was called to develop a strategy to save the Sweetgrass Hills from the threat of cyanide heap leach gold mining. "The Salish, Kootenai have stories about them," Chief Stick continued, "the Blackfeet have stories about them, the Cree, all the different tribes. The Gros Ventre, the Assiniboine, they had sun dances just over the hill on the east side of the butte. These Hills are sacred to all tribes even into Canada. The songs of the sweatlodge comes from these mountains."

For Indian people of the northern plains, the Sweetgrass Hills have traditionally been a place for meeting and spiritual retreat. Aerial photographs of the lowlands reveal thousands of tipi rings that testify to the social, cultural and spiritual significance of the Sweetgrass Hills. Base

camp for spiritual ceremonies at the peaks and high ridges of the buttes, the tipi rings are also testimony to the ecological richness of the Hill as a source of sacred plants, medicines and paints used for healing and in ceremonies.

Mike Swims Under, a Blackfoot elder and medicine man, who received his spiritual teachings in the Sweetgrass Hills also spoke eloquently of their sacred importance to Indian people. "This is where life began for all Indians in these hills," Swims Under told those seated around the tipi. "A lot of the sacred bundles that we have in the Blackfeet nation originate right here. A lot of the legends that you hear of today originated right here in these hills. The people that left us, the old Indian people, this is where they had a lot of sacred doings in these hills, there was a lot of medicine lodges put up in these hills by the Blackfeet. . . This is what these hills mean to us --- it is a whole way of life to us, these hills. A lot of our beginnings start here. Now there is talk about these mining companies coming in here destroying these hills.

They're destroying a whole way of life. This is what saddens me. It saddens me that all these holy places that we have are being threatened. Why?"

The encampment was organized to begin to answer the question Mike Swims Under posed, to strategize a solution that involves a complex web of competing interests and for ceremony and prayer. Sponsors of the encampment included Curly Bear Wagner, director of the Blackfeet Cultural Center in Browning, Montana and Darrell Kipp, founder of the Piegan Institute in co-operation with elders, medicine people and traditional practitioners such as John Yellow Kidney, Mike Swims Under, Pat Chief Stick and Duncan Standing Rock.

The encampment follows an order by the Secretary of the Interior that temporarily protects the Hills. Referred to as a segregation by the Department of the Interior, the action removed federally owned minerals in the Sweetgrass Hills on

*Continued on page 8*



Pat Chief Stick, Mike Swims Under, John "Buster" Yellow Kidney, Curly Bear Wagner, Nicholas Vrooman, and Darrell Kripp at the traditional Blackfeet encampment.

D. Kakkak:

July 29, 1993 from exploration or new claims. The segregation allows the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to protect the area while evaluating existing mining claims and associated proposals. The segregation precludes new mining claims and exploration in the Sweetgrass Hills for a period of two years. During this two year period the BLM will determine if existing claims purposed for exploration are valid.

The segregation mandates the BLM to prepare an amendment to the West HiLine Resource Management Plan (RMP), a document that designated the Sweetgrass Hills an area of critical environmental concern but allows for mineral exploration and mining. The amendment to the BLM's RMP intends to guide future use of the Sweetgrass Hills as well as provide the necessary information to determine whether the Sweet Grass Hills should be permanently withdrawn from mining.

Cautioning against the optimism the two year moratorium seems to promise, Richard L. Hopkins, Area Manager of the BLM in Great Falls said, "There are a lot of 'what ifs' and potentials. In two years it's still going to be a very complicated situation." Hopkins then offered the following worst case scenario --- if the validity examinations show the claims to be valid, then they become private property and subject to private rights. Mining interests would then be entitled to explore and if they find minerals, begin the process of mining."

Even if the 1872 General Mining Law is changed within the next two years it is unlikely that those changes would effect the situation in the Sweetgrass Hills. Scott Height, District Geologist for the BLM, speculated that "... whatever the changes might be, they would include some provisions for honoring existing mining claims. We're not hanging our hat on any changes to the 1872 General Mining Law, we will go ahead with our validity tests to determine if these claims are legitimate or not and manage them based on that."

Stanley Jaynes, Archaeologist for the BLM in Lewistown, likened the situation with E. K. Lehmann and Associates, who hold the remaining mining leases to the Sweetgrass Hills, to a game of chess. The

BLM doesn't know if E.K. Lehmann has made mineral "discovery." "In 1986 and 1989 Santa Fe Pacific Mining and Cominco did some drill holes and they did sampling from that. Lehmann has all that data. What that data indicates is open to conjecture at this point. When the federal mineral examiners physically go out there to see if there is an exposure as part of the validity tests, the claimant (E. K. Lehmann) has the privilege of presenting their data if they chose too do so. Exactly what he will do I don't know. That is proprietary data that he bought from somebody else. He may hold on to his claims or, if the government determines that he doesn't have a valid claim, he might use his data to challenge the government. It's a real snake nest."

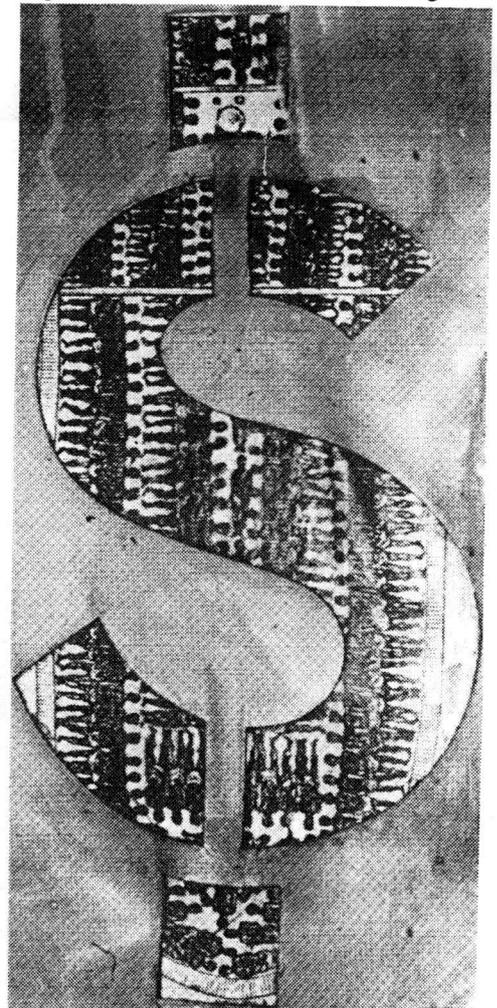
"We (BLM) have approached the Nature Conservancy (NC) and the Conservation Fund (CF) to see if they would approach the claimants and try to purchase those claims and set them aside in a conservation easement," Hopkins said. "The CF and NC said they have too many obligations nationwide and don't have the money or the staff to work on it. There is a Land and Conservation fund through the federal government where we have purchased property from private land owners in the past and set it aside. We have done that in grizzly bear habitat along the Rocky Mountain Front."

"The same approach could be taken here. The tribes have talked about pooling their own resources and working out some agreement, even with Congress. The tribes could approach Congress to see if they would appropriate the money to purchase the properties. We met with elders representing most of the tribes in the area during August," Hopkins said, "and the elders felt that the tribal councils should do something."

The segregation order has entangled the BLM in a maze of federal and state agencies. "We are trying to do five things at once" Hopkins explained at the encampment. In addition to the validity tests and amendment to the RMP currently in effect "... there is the mineral withdrawal decision, whether to permanently withdraw the area, which would requires a report to Congress. If the area is withdrawn we would need to amend the RMP. We're also working with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) who in consultation with the Native Americans have created a boundary and are

working on a National Historic District (NHD)," he said.

In order for the Sweetgrass Hills to be set aside as a NHD, all the parties affected by the designation have to agree. The SHPO held meetings about a year ago in Chester but could not get the majority of the land owners to agree to the NHD designation. The same is true to gain protection for specific sacred sites within the Sweetgrass Hills under the National Historic Preservation Act. "When there is an impact on an area that is significant to the tribes you have to try to work out a Memorandum of Understanding with the tribes," Hopkins explained. "We tried that in August (but) we were unable to reach agreement and we were unable to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MAO) with the tribes." Traditionalists believe there is no way to mitigate the impacts of exploration or mining in the Sweetgrass Hills. The only way to enter into an MOA is if both parties agree. In this case the federal government and the Native American tribes would have to agree that there are certain mitigation



*Envidia by Darrell Johnson*

Continued from page 8

measures that could be taken as has recently happened with the Medicine Wheel.

"It is essentially the BLM responsibility to develop a program for mitigation at this site," David Schwab, State Archeologist for the SHPO in Helena, said. "The SHPO role is to review and comment on the agency's actions. Because we began this nomination process before the mining activity was proposed we were able to pull together the information. The question now is how do you mitigate this activity. Is there any way to mitigate it? I think that that is an issue you are dealing with across the board with sacred sites. It just doesn't fit the traditional framework that the 106 process (National Historic Preservation Act) was designed to fit when you are talking about natural landscapes."

"We maintain that any activity within the area that upsets the natural setting -- it has been described to me that there are spirit powers in this area -- disturbs those spirit powers and they will leave. Once those spirit powers have left then the area no longer has the spiritual significance it had before. The northern Cheyenne talk about those things having happened. Coal development activity on the northern Cheyenne reservation where they take out huge pieces of land and put the land back together the way it looked -- supposedly, but the spirit life is gone, the spiritual life is gone and will never return. That is the crux of the matter. The nomination process does not guarantee protection. I really feel that by pulling together all this information and by using oral tradition, I have interviewed elders representing a number of different tribes in the region, that we were able to make a strong case that this is an important and unique area. I think this is what prompted some of our representatives and senators to step in."

Following the strong and unanimous public opposition to mining development in the Sweetgrass Hills, Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior issued the segregation order. In a letter to Babbitt, Congressman Pat Williams wrote "the Hills ... are revered by the generations of farming and ranching families who have worked the land in their shadow."

"The Sweetgrass Hills are ... among the most sacred places for Indian tribes across Montana and the West," Williams

continued. "Our constitution guarantees all Americans freedom to practice religion. As Jews and Christians would ask for the protection of their shrines, so too do Native Americans ask for protection of the Sweetgrass Hills. Countless generations of Blackfeet, Cree, Gros Ventre, Salish, Kootenai and Assiniboine have visited the Sweetgrass Hills. To these Americans, the idea of roading, trenching, and drilling in the Sweetgrass Hills is an anathema and cannot be mitigated."

Exploratory companies like E.K. Lehmann, whose corporate headquarters are in Minneapolis, think differently. They hold or have leased the remaining twelve claims both on Federal and private land, that involve private surface/federal mineral and private surface/private mineral rights. Lehmann's last partner, Manhattan Mineral, proposed using a helicopter to obtain ore samples which is an extreme method used by mining companies to obtain ore samples in places the BLM determines are environmentally sensitive. Core samples gathered by miniature drilling rigs provide the minerals for the "discovery" criteria of the 1872 General Mining Law. Mining can then proceed subject to the mitigation criteria established in the Environmental Impact Statement.

E.K. Lehmann and Associates speculates in mining leases -- holding them until a larger company wants to become a partner or buy out the lease(s). One of the most active of the exploration companies, E.K. Lehmann works in conjunction with major mining companies like Exxon and Kennicott to speculate on mineral leases. E.K. Lehmann, for example was critical to the efforts of the Flambeau Mining Company, a subsidiary of Kennecott and the British mining giant, Rio Tinto Zinc, to open the Flambeau Mine in Ladysmith, Wisconsin.

In order to mine low grade gold companies use cyanide heap leach technology, a process that makes extracting an ounce of gold out of twenty ton of rock profitable. Mining low grade gold deposits involves toxic process difficult to contain. Ask the community living on the Fort Belknap reservation who have been dealing with Zortman and Ladusky heap leach gold mines for more than a decade and are beginning to see the effects in birth defects and rising cancer rates. The State of Montana is currently suing Zortman Mining Inc. and its parent

company, Pegasus Gold Corp., alleging unpermitted discharges that are degrading state water.

Al Gedicks, Director of the Center for Alternative Mining Development Policy, attributes E.K. Lehmann's success to a familiarity with the literature of the opposition and ability to "... incorporate responses to the major criticisms of the industry when they propose to buy leases or convince communities to grant them prospecting or drilling permits. That makes the jobs of the majors that much easier. The majors are very clumsy when it comes to dealing with public relations and having some sensitivity to the concerns and questions of a local community."

The encampment brought together Native people from the northern plains and Canada, ranchers, farmers, environment groups, local residents, attorneys and representatives from state and federal agencies who share concerns over the Sweetgrass Hills' potential for mineral discovery and subsequent mining. Curly Bear Wagner, summarizing the experience of the encampment said, "The Sweetgrass Hills is like a national treasure to the Blackfeet. One of the greatest things we have to do now is come together as a group of people and work together to protect these hills from any mining that might occur. We are strictly against that because the water here is very important to our people." In addition and as part of their sacredness, the Hills are an essential source of ground and surface water recharge for the surrounding area.

"One of the things I'd like to see from our supporters is that they write their congressional people wherever they come from. We all have to come together as a group of people and stick together because we are all in this together. We just can't say that this is an American Indian problem."

"We have never had such a large encampment. We would like to have another one this spring and also this fall. We are also planning a relay run around the Sweetgrass Hills. It's good to see everybody come together. It's been a very successful encampment. Everyone got along, we had a pipe ceremony, a sweat lodge ceremony and went up in the hills together as a group of people and we acted as a group of people. We didn't separate -- well that's a white man, that's an Indian -- no, we held each another's hand and we worked in unity."

# UDC Conference in Cuba

Lisa Maya Knauer

The participation of two ACD board members (Ron Sakolsky and myself) in the Union for Democratic Communications (UDC) December conference, "Media, Culture and Popular Hegemony: A Panamerican Dialogue" was only partly inspired by a desire to renew contact (UDC and ACD have had friendly, if intermittent, relations over many years). To be honest, we went mostly because of the location — Cuba. It's hard, therefore, to share impressions of the conference without writing about Cuba — but I'll try to save most of my reflections about Cuba for a future article.

The conference was held at the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión (the International School of Film and Television, or EICTV), located about 30 km. outside of Havana. Cuba's economic woes are both more and less visible in the countryside — food is more plentiful (EICTV has extensive fields and gardens, so we were treated to lots of fresh fruits and copious salads), but so are the problems caused by fuel shortages — rusting farm machinery, crowds of people at every crossroads searching for a ride to school or work.

UDC structured its conference along two tracks. Panels and workshops allowed UDC members (a large number of whom are academics) to share research and thoughts on themes ranging from Community Radio to Media, Culture and Environments. Five plenary sessions were devoted to dialogue with our Cuban colleagues. Each featured several Cubans working in a specific area of communications: film, television, print journalism, radio, and music.

The panels and workshops were very uneven. Some sessions began with people reading papers, like any academic gathering (I was one of only 3 or 4 people present with no university affiliation). Others — for example, an almost-cancelled workshop on community radio — involved a more open-ended and activist-oriented dialogue. The sessions with the Cubans led to some interesting exchanges on ques-

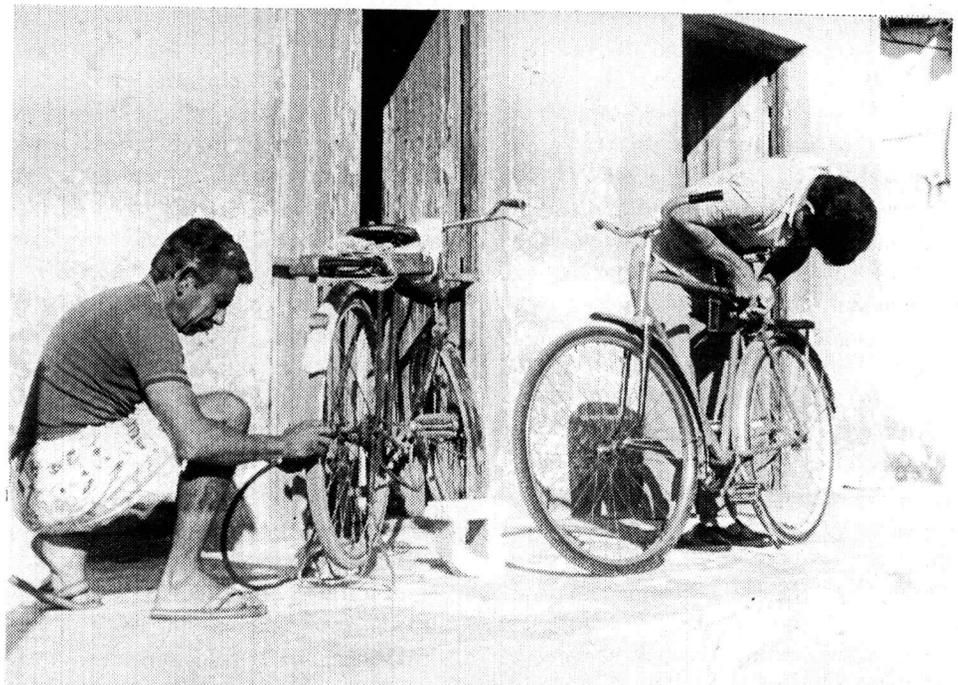
tions of machismo, racism, freedom of expression, but it often seemed as though the Cubans didn't know who their audience was or what our concerns (and level of political sophistication) might be. This may have been due to the considerable difficulties in mounting a conference in a foreign country — exacerbated by the fact that communication between the two countries is nearly impossible. And there may have been subjects that the Cubans were not willing to address — or at least not as frankly and fully as we would have liked.

Holding a conference in a foreign country had both benefits and drawbacks. A combination of travel woes (hours and hours of waiting, waiting, waiting) and the challenges of negotiating a foreign culture drew us together very quickly. But Cuba also proved to be a distraction from the conference. While some had planned to stay in Cuba after the conference ended, many people were only there for four days, and the Havana Film Festival was running concurrently. So there was a constant scramble of people looking for rides to Havana and disappearing for an after-

noon or a day. Although there were only 50 or 60 participants, there were some whom I never met.

Compared to a typical ACD conference (whatever that might be!), there was less concern with process and the role of UDC as an organization. The final plenary was a session on Cuban music, so there was no space to summarize or evaluate the conference together (nor was there any real coming-together at the beginning). However, the final evening did feature a rousing performance by Cuba's most popular musical group, Los Van Van (the equivalent of having Bruce Springsteen play at an ACD conference).

For both Ron and me, the conference was a worthwhile experience — useful contacts for both ACD and our own work, and a springboard for more extended visits in Cuba. Since returning, I have talked with ACD Board member Betty Kano, a longtime Cuba solidarity activist, about how ACD members can collaborate on Cuba-related work, and we will develop some proposals by the next issue of Cultural Democracy. □



Bicycle repair shop, Santa Marta

Lisa Maya Knauer

# Desecration Of Apache Sacred Mountain Continues (Update)

The University of Arizona announced last summer that they were abandoning the move to Peak 10,298. They finally acknowledged that moving to Peak 10,298 would require formal consultation required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Since the UA and the Forest Service (FS) know that the telescope project could never pass the muster of the ESA, behind-the-scenes maneuvering was necessary for the approval of another site. The Forest Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) secretly decided to allow tree cutting on a site which violates the rider congress passed in 1988 to allow the telescopes. This incredible move to East Emerald peak shows us how willing the FS and USFWS will go to accommodate the UA. The FS and USFWS made the incredible decision that this move only required informal consultation and gave a "may effect, but not adverse" ruling. Of course, they relied on the flawed data provided by the UA and FS biostutes.

The Forest Service gave a permit on December 6, 1993. Before dawn, the next morning, UA loggers were cutting trees. While this was happening, FS personnel were lying and saying no cutting would happen until next spring. Our FS has allowed the UA to cut 250 old growth trees (over 250 years old - some of the last of their type in the world!) on a site they admit is an inferior to other locations. Furthermore the UA does not have the money to complete the project.

This current situation indicates just how



Photo by Dwight Metzger

*University of Arizona continues its "Cultural termination" policy on Mt. Graham*

desperate the UA and its partners are. (These partners are the Max Planck institute of Germany, Arcetri of Italy, and the Vatican! Partners still considering are University of Michigan in East Lansing and the University of Pittsburgh.)

On January 17, Dr. John D. Fernie, head of the University of Toronto Astronomy Department, announced that the University had dropped out of the Columbus Telescope Project, citing lack of funds.

Letters of Protest should be sent to: Your Senator and Congressional representative; Mike Espy, Secretary of Agriculture - Dept. of Agriculture, 14th St. & Independence NW, Wash DC 20250; Bruce Babbitt, Secretary - Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C St. NW, Wash. DC 20240.

For more information write the Mt. Graham Coalition 666 Pennsylvania Av. SE, Suite 200, Wash. DC 20003, (202) 547-9009, Ext 3245. □

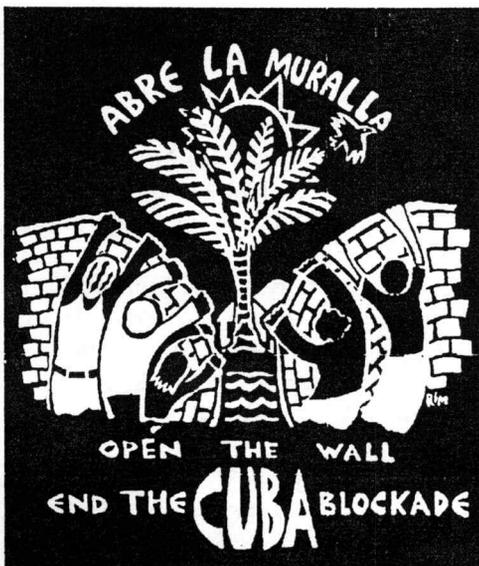
## FALL 1994 ACD GATHERING SET FOR NEW YORK CITY

At the November meeting/teleconference of the ACD Board, it became clear that the proposed conference on culture and the environment (featured in the last issue of Cultural Democracy) would have to be scheduled for 1995. Rather than have a three-year gap between conferences, we decided to hold a smaller gathering in

New York City in the fall of 1994, preliminary to the 1995 conference.

Our proposal is to have fewer performances and formal presentations than in recent conferences, but to use this as an opportunity for ACD members and like-minded people to share our own work and thinking. It is also an opportunity to think together about the issues to be addressed in the 1995 conference. So one theme will be culture and the environment. A related area of interest is to look at the impact of NAFTA on cultural politics and cultural organizing in the Americas — a natural follow-up to our work around the quincennial. And a third focus will be arts advocacy and funding. New York City's new Republican mayor suggests siphoning city funds from grassroots groups to give even more money to major institutions like the Metropolitan Museum. There are proposals in other areas to eliminate public support for the arts. How can we develop a long-range strategy for addressing these issues?

The New York conference will have a strong emphasis on local and regional outreach. Nothing is set in stone, and we welcome input from ACD members about your needs and interests. If you have ideas for workshops, or NY contacts who might be willing to help out, please contact Susan Perlstein at Elders Share the Arts, 57 Willoughby St., Brooklyn, NY 11201 (718) 488-8565. □



Ricardo Levin Morales

# Announcing the Cultural Environment Movement

Most of what we know, or think we know from stories we're told. That process used to be hand crafted, home made, and community inspired. Now it is mostly mass-produced and policy-driven. It is the end result of a complex manufacturing and marketing process.

For the first time in history, most children are born into homes where most of the stories do not come from their parents, schools, churches, communities, and in many places even from their native countries, but from a handful of conglomerates who have something to sell.

These changes have had profound consequences. They have altered the way we grow up, learn, and live. Channels proliferate and new technologies pervade home and office while mergers and bottom-line pressures shrink creative alternatives and reduce diversity of content. Media are coalescing into an integrated cultural environment that constrains life's choices as the natural environment defines life's chances.

The consequences are as diverse as they are far reaching. For many people they mean an enrichment of local cultural horizons. But for many they also mean a narrowing of perspectives, homogenization of outlooks, and limitation of alternatives.

This condition did not emerge spontaneously or after thoughtful deliberation. It has been a radical departure overriding significant public opposition, a fact little noted in our history books. Its world wide fallout and human implications have only recently been studied and are just beginning to be understood.

Ten-year-olds responding to a survey could name more brands of beer than presidents. Nine out of ten six-year-olds recognized "Old Joe" as a cigarette ad. The new cultural environment blurs diverse outlooks, blends perspectives into a pervasive mainstream, and blends that mainstream to the service of those who own and pay for it.

Of course, ultimately we pay for it as

consumers, but we pay when we wash, not when we watch. The price of a bar of soap includes money to pay for the "soap opera" that plugs the brand of soap and style of life. and we have no choice but to pay for that levy.

For citizens, this is taxation without representation. For advertisers, it is a tax deductible business expense that buys the right to tell stories we hold in common. For society it is a way of preempting alternatives, limiting freedom of the press to those who own it, divorcing payment from choice, and denying meaningful public participation in cultural decision making.

The Cultural Environment Movement is concerned with such distortions of the democratic process. They include the promotion of practices that drug, hurt, poison, and kill thousands every day; portrayals that dehumanize and stigmatize; cults of violence that desensitize, terrorize and brutalize; the growing siege mentality of our cities; the drift towards ecological suicide; the silent crumbling of our infrastructure; widening resource gaps and the most glaring inequalities in the industrial world; the costly neglect of vital institutions such as public education, health care, and the arts; make believe image politics corrupting the electoral process.

How can we heal the wounds of all the stories that hurt and tear us apart? How can we put culture-power to liberating ends? The new cultural environment challenges us to mobilize as public citizens as effectively as commercials mobilize us to act as private consumers and address these questions. The Cultural Environment Movement proposes six areas:

- **Building a coalition and constituency.** We involve media-oriented networks and councils in the U.S. and abroad; teachers, student and parents; groups concerned with children, youth and aging; women's groups; "minority" organizations; religious, educational, health, environmental, legal, and

other professional associations; consumer groups and agencies; associations of creative workers in the media and in the arts and sciences; independent computer network organizers; and other organizations and individuals committed to creating mechanisms of public participation in cultural policy making.

- **Opposing domination.** We resist censorship, both public and private; act to extend the First Amendment beyond its use as a shield for the powerful; work to reduce concentration of control of and by media and to include in decision making the less affluent more vulnerable groups marginalized by marketers.

- **Cooperating with groups in other countries that work for the integrity and independence of their own cultural decision making.** We need to learn from countries that have opened their media to the democratic process and oppose trade policies that make cultural development more difficult.

- **Working with journalists, artists, writers, actors, directors, and other creative workers struggling for greater freedom and diversity in media and expression.**

- **Promoting media literacy, awareness, critical viewing and reading, and other media education efforts.**

We will be collecting, publicizing and disseminating information about relevant programs, services, curricula, and research and training materials.

- **Placing cultural policy issues on the social-political agenda.**

We will be supporting local, national, and international media councils, study groups, citizen groups, "minority" and professional groups and other forums of public discussion, policy development, representation, and action, moving toward a realistic democratic media agenda.

Send comments to: *Cultural Environment Movement*, PO Box 31847, Philadelphia, PA 19104. □

# Blips and clips from our mail box

## Arts Management Conference in July Explores Arts for Social Change

The Arts Extension Service (AES) is a national arts service organization facilitating the continuing education of artists, arts organizations, and community leaders. AES will hold its annual Summer Program in Arts Management July 6, 7, and 8, 1984 in Amherst MA. For a second year, the conference will be dedicated to exploring the arts as a tool for social and community change. Arts for a Change: A Social Action Agenda will include a series of 25 workshops and seminars covering a myriad of topics including community organizing, art making in a multicultural society, risk-taking in collaborations, grass roots advocacy, building partnerships and coalitions, creative fundraising approaches, and transforming organizational leadership and vision. Guest presenters are drawn from the arts, government, education, and community and social service sectors.

The program fee of \$295 includes a

text, handouts, and six meals. Inexpensive accommodations are available on campus. For information or to register, call (413) 545-2360 or write for a detailed brochure to: Arts Extension Service, Division of Continuing Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

## As Seen by Both Sides Opens in Hanoi, Viet Nam

The internationally acclaimed exhibition *As Seen by Both Sides* opened at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Hanoi on January 6, 1994. After the Hanoi opening the exhibition will travel to other museums in Viet Nam.

The exhibition represents the first showing of contemporary Vietnamese art to be seen in the U.S. since 1975. Its purpose is to promote better understanding and reconciliation among the citizens of both countries, which have yet to establish diplomatic relations.

The exhibition opened to the public on May 11, 1990 at the Arvada Center for the Arts in Arvada, CO. Since then it

has traveled to 14 other sites in the U.S.. The show is comprised of 82 works that take the war as their subject. It includes 20 American and 20 Vietnamese artists. Most are veterans of the war, as are the organizers of the exhibit.

A scholarly catalog with 67 color and 61 black-and-white reproductions accompanies the exhibition. It includes essays by Lucy Lippard, David Kunzle, C. David Thomas, Tran Viet Son, president of the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture, and Quach Van Phong, general secretary of the Fine Arts Association in Ho Chi Minh City.

For more information write: Indochina Arts Project, 20 Webster Court, Newton Centre, MA, 02195 (617) 527-5670.

## Organizational Support For Presentation of WESTAF/NEA Regional Fellowship in Crafts, Painting, Photography, Sculpture, and Works on Paper

Each year 30 artists from the west are chosen by nationally recognized arts professionals to honor exceptional contemporary work. Up to \$1000 per fellowship artist is available to not-for-profit organizations anywhere in the U.S. for exhibitions of one or more fellows work, educational activities, and commissioning of new works. Deadline June 30, 1994. Write, Kristen Elrick, WESTAF Visual Arts, 326 Montezuma, Santa Fe, NM 87501, 505-988-1166.

## Earth Peace Inter'l Film Festival

Seeking films in three categories: Justice and Human Rights; Issues of War & Peace; and The Environment. Entrance fee required. Contact: Earth Peace Inter'l Film Festival c/o Burlington City Arts, City Hall, Burlington, VT 05401. Deadline: April 1, 1994.



Michael Schwartz

Continued on page 17

# Book Reviews

## • **Gone to Croatan: Origins of North American Dropout Culture.**

Review by Chris Dodge

Edited by Ron Sakolsky and James Koehnline. Autonomedia, 1993. 382 P. Did the lost colonists of Roanoke drop out and go native, fed up with slaving for a bunch of absentee London gentlemen? Were the Maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp "the original Rainbow Coalition"? Was Henry Tufts the first countercultural anti-hero in the U.S.? This history of grassroots interracial and multiracial dissident movements in North America posits answers to dozens of such questions. Relying at times on leaps of faith to span gaps in source material, this book still succeeds, as scholarship and inspirational "people's history" alike. Especially good are essays on 18th century "sailors, slaves and the Atlantic working class," anarchic resistance in the American Revolution, and Peter Lamborn Wilson's "Caliban's Mask: Spiritual Anarchy and the Wild Man in Colonial America." The latter examines 17th century struggles against Puritans, the "ruling elite in Massachusetts, who viewed nature as 'howling wilderness' and the Red man as a devil." Also included is an account describing "two insurrections in post revolutionary America" (the Whiskey Rebellion and Shay's Rebellion), and material on pan-Indian resistance, the Metis, African-Seminole Indians, and the Iroquois influence on the women's suffrage movement, along with an examination of "what to do with white people" ("The Dream of Injun Joe: a Page from the Alcatraz Seminars," by Jack Forbes) and Gerald Vizenor's account of futile attempts to persuade Cal-Berkeley administrators to rename part of a building after Ishi, the Yaní Indian. (P.O. Box 568, Williamsburg Station, Brooklyn, NY 11211-0568, 718-387-6471; \$12, paper, 0-936756-92-6).

## • **Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice**

Edited by Richard Hofrichter with a forward by Lois Gibbs, this book is an anthology of writings of the environ-

mental justice movement's leading thinkers, researchers, and activists. It explores the movement's philosophical underpinnings, its global connections and its relevance to civil rights and workers' rights movements. A major goal of the movement is to rebuild America, community by community, finding more democratic ways of making decisions about economic development, workplace health, and ecological matters. A major strategy is to build multiracial, multi-issue coalitions. *Toxic Struggles* includes contributions by the late Caesar Chavez, Winona LaDuke, Richard Moore, and John O'Conner. It also includes an essay by Richard Hofrichter discussing the role of the cultural worker. Based on 17 principles formulated by the First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, environmental justice seeks more than conservation, preservation, regulation, and reform. Environmental justice seeks a reconstruction of society — a guarantee of the fundamental rights to clean air, land, and water, and an end to unlimited corporate expansion and exploitation. *Toxic Struggles* articulates that vision. (Published by New Society Publishers, 4527 Springfield Av., Philadelphia, PA, 19143, 215-382-6543, fax 215-222-1993, \$16.95, paper, 0-86571-270-0) □

## • **Black Madonnas**

by Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum.

Review by Sal Salerno

*"I am she that is the natural mother of all things ... my name, my divinity is adored throughout the world, in diverse manners, in variable customs, and by many names ... the Phrygians that are the first of all men call me the Mother of the gods of Pessinus; the Athenians, which sprung from their own soil, Cecropian Minerva; the Cyprians, which are girt about the sea, Paphian Venus; the Cretans, which bear arrows, Dictynian Diana; the Sicilians, which speak three tongues, infernal Proserpine; the Eleusinians, their ancient goddess Ceres; some Bellona, others Hecate, others Ramnusie and principally both sort of Ethiopians, which dwell in the Orient and are*



*enlightened by the morning rays of the sun;; and the Egyptians, which are excellent in all kind of ancient doctrine, and by their proper ceremonies accustomed to worship me, do call me by my true name, Queen Isis."*

Apuleius

Over the summer, while I was reading Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum's *Black Madonnas*, I happened to notice an article in the *New York Times*. It was about the pope's denunciation of what he perceives to be a growing threat to the Vatican's style of Catholicism — paganism in the guise of feminism. The culprits, in the pope's mind, are bitter feminists whose ideology threatens to infect Catholic women worldwide. He urged bishops to combat this temptress in all her manifestations, particularly the myths, rituals and symbols connected to the earth goddess. The pope asserted that nature worship is not only unacceptable for its blending of Catholicism with animism but because it was beginning to usurp the traditional celebrations of the Christian faith.

By the time I finished the article I was sure that *la modonna nera* (the black madonna) must top the Vatican's list of heretics, even though she was not widely known anymore within the Italian American community. I realized why my grandmother discretely kept her madonna altar in the bedroom and the pictures of Jesus with the bleeding heart everywhere else. In America, *la modonna nera* was submerged. Even the Italian American feste, where statues of the madonna were paraded in the streets, were altered by church who made the festa into a commercial enterprise. Ital-

ian immigrant spirituality was corrupted by the Church in ways similar to those the Vatican now uses in its collusion with the Federal court system and the University of Arizona to undermine Native spirituality and rob Native people of their sacred land.

The Vatican became a partner in the University of Arizona's project to build a colossal telescope monument to Columbus on Mt. Graham. Mt. Graham is a sacred mountain to the Apache people, home to the mountain spirit. The driving force behind the "Pope Scope," Fr. George Coyne, S.J. and Vatican Astronomer, has a keen eye for heretics. Testifying in court against the claims of Apache elders and medicine people, Coyne was later quoted referring to Apache spirituality as a "religiosity ... which must be suppressed with all the force we can muster."

Shocked by the tragic irony of Coyne's comments, which came at the height of counter quincennial protests, reporters pressed him to elaborate. Coyne backpedaled. It seems he meant to condemn "the environmental tendency toward the worship of nature." Coyne was angry at environmentalists. He was angry at their coalition with Apaches, their mobilization against the Columbus Project in defence of a red squirrel and finally their efforts to save the virgin old growth forest from becoming a platform for the pope's exploration of the heavens.

The Apache mountain spirit and the black madonna are similar symbols in that they both lie at the heart of endangered spiritual cultures. While their practice of veneration is viewed by organized religion and commercial developers as a threat, they provide occasions for ceremonies and other offerings believed to aid in the survival of family and community. They differ in the sense that the black madonna represents a hybrid, in which some manifestation of the ancient goddess appears cloaked in a Christian symbol. Like the Virgin of Guadalupe, *la madonna nera* is an important symbol of spiritual synergism/appropriation in Italian culture.

The subject of the recovery of the goddess culture of Old Europe has received increasing attention from activ-

ists and scholars. The path breaking work of Marijia Gimbutas, for example, has established the antiquity and ubiquity of the mother goddess while other feminist scholars like Riane Eisler have grappled with the contemporary relevance of Old Europe's land based spiritual traditions that venerated the mother goddess. Chiavola Birnbaum's contributions to this dialogue are as numerous as they are varied and layered. Her work reflects the veiled images of Italy's dark goddess, looks into the immense



silence that shrouds her memory, analyzes a labyrinth of archeological and anthropological clues for traces of her historic presence, and finds in the myriad myths, traditions, legends and stories living traditions that venerate her mystery.

*Black Madonnas* is part of the *controcanto femminile*, the counter song of women. In the book we find the voices of activists and scholars within the Italian women's movement who brought *riappropriazione dell'identità* (reappropriation of identity)

to the center stage of Italian politics in the late 60's. Yet, it is also the story of the *magia extra canonica* (spirituality outside of the canon) that continues to be a part of everyday life in peasant communities, Italy's "subaltern" communities (a term coined by Antonio Gramsci to describe those subordinated historically, culturally, economically and politically). *Black Madonnas* is about the spirituality of landless peasants, migrant laborers and the urban poor whose religio-political beliefs are expressed in lullabies sung by grandmothers and in stories of Giustizia (Justice) and her clown son Giufa (a Muslim name intended to satirize Jesus), who carries out his mother's errands in the world, errands that typically subverted patriarchy. Chiavola Birnbaum celebrates the diversity of *feste* and *carnevali* that venerate *la madonna nera* and *gli santoni* (primordial goddesses put into the protective custody of Christian saints) and the struggle to continue these practices in the face of the hostile and repressive control of church, mafia and state. *Black Madonnas* is "a metaphor for a memory of the time when the earth was believed to be the body of a woman and all creatures were equal, a memory transmitted in vernacular traditions of earth bonded cultures, historically expressed in cultural and political resistance, and glimpsed today in movements aiming for transformation."

Chiavola Birnbaum's selection of Italy, specifically southern Italy and Sicily, as a focus for her study is significant in itself. Greek mythology made Sicily the land of the cyclops and sirens, the place where Hades abducted his bride Persephone. Much of Italy's early goddess history is obscured by Europe's western expansion. The story of the rape of Persephone, for example, is a veiled reference to the invasion by northern Zeus worshipers, an instance where mythology is used to establish the pseudo-historic justification for political and territorial claims. In the sites she visited in Italy, particularly those in southern Italy and Sicily, Chiavola Birnbaum finds shrines to the black madonna built over or near pagan sites

Continued on page 18

of worship of the Great Mother in one of her many manifestations. In shuttling between myth, legend, history and archeology Chiavola Birnbaum's scholarship establishes in these manifestations of the goddess the sisterhood of Italian dark women divinities with those of North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia illuminating continuities and synergisms born out of centuries of struggle and resistance.

In asserting that *la madonna nera* is intentionally black she contradicts centuries of clerics and scholars who have tried to explain away the madonna's black coloration as an accident or the result of smoke from candles. That cler-

ics continue to hide these "dirty virgins" or climb ladders with paint buckets to erase their memory with white paint testifies to the power of the *la madonna nera*. The motivation of clerics to obliterate her memory is explained by the fact that many of the sites of worship to the black madonna continue to be a source for the movement culture that is inspiring progressive collectivist, environmental and feminist projects.

Chiavola Birnbaum's work recovers the woman centered vernacular traditions of Italian spiritual/political culture and explores the relevance of these ancient myths for a new society. She offers the metaphor of the black madonna, powerful protectress of the poor and oppressed and fierce advocate

of justice, as a source of cultural renewal and healing. This is a bold book that envisions equality with difference at a time when difference is being used as a mechanism of division. In the authors words, Black Madonnas can be viewed as "an Italian American bridge to Native Americans, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, other European Americans, deep ecologists, feminists, and everyone concerned for a genuinely multicultural civilization in the United States, and a just world."

*Black madonnas: Feminism, Religion and Politics in Italy* by Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum (Boston: Northeastern University Press). □

## The Newark Arts Alliance - a Brief History by David Robertson

On February 20, 1993, a group of people got together at a space offered by the East End Cafe in Newark, Delaware. At a roundtable discussion on "Cultural Planning in the '90s," they talked about what could be done to improve the cultural climate in Newark.

The diverse gathering at that discussion included individuals representing the many different media as well as supporters of the arts in Newark.

At that meeting and at subsequent community meetings, people discussed many concerns: how artists and crafts people need business and display spaces; how to meet the cultural needs of young people; how the diversity of Newark needs to be better articulated; how a more vital art scene would contribute to strengthening the Newark community. And they kept coming back to the same question: where do we go from here?

The answer that emerged after many meetings was the Newark Arts Alliance. The Alliance is an organization of mostly local residents who are committed to building an environment in Newark where art can be created and enjoyed at a grassroots level, and where cultural expression can flourish in all its diversity.

### What are we doing?

To bring this environment into being, the NAA sponsors a community arts festival once a month, with the cooperation of Newark business people and the University of Delaware and through the



efforts of local residents. The festival, called Downtown with the Arts, is held on Main Street in Newark and in the downtown area. It includes music stages, an art loop, a coffeehouse performance area, a crafter's alley, and street performers. We now have a startup grant of

\$1000 from the Newark City Council and are applying for funding from other sources.

### Where do we go from here?

We have made a start at addressing issues of creativity and community in Newark. We are trying to capture the creative energy of local people to keep the effort going and make the dream of more art in Newark a reality.

We are discussing whether to increase the frequency of arts festivals, have more interactive arts projects, more coffeehouse evenings. We have initiated a project called "Main Street Music," in which local performers will collectively produce and sell a CD album containing their own music. One dream is to organize around the creation of a community cultural center.

We consider ourselves to be a grassroots local arts agency, and we're anxious to network with communities around the country with similar interests. If you would like more information about our work, please write to NAA, PO Box 1085, Newark, DE 19715-1085, or call at (302) 368-5137. □

### \$\$\$ for Women

Money for Women/ Barbara Deming Memorial Fund offers small grants to "individual feminists active in the arts whose work speaks for peace and social justice." \$5 application fee. Contact Money for Women/ Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 40-1043, Brooklyn, NY 11240-1043. Deadline: June 30, 1994.

### Interdisciplinary Arts & Social Change Program.

The New College of California now offers a unique, two year, accredited program combining advanced work in Visual, Performing, and Video Arts with interdisciplinary collaboration and analysis of the impact of arts on society. Graduates of the program will be able to apply their arts practice within community-based educational, social service, health, community development, and political contexts.

Interdisciplinary Arts & Social Change seeks the need for accomplishment in a specific field and/or practice with the understanding that all the arts and all knowledge are essentially interconnected. We strive to integrate the cultural, political, spiritual, and aesthetic/technical concerns of art making by training artists to be both cultural workers and socially responsible visionaries. For more information contact: Arlene Biala, Admissions Coordinator, Interdisciplinary Arts & Social Change, New College of California, 766 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94110 (415) 626-0884.

### The Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond

Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond is a national network of community organizers combining many years of experience in community work and movement building. They provide education and training in leadership development, networking, personal and community empowerment, and basic orga-

nizing skills to low-income communities, social change organizations, religious groups, social agencies, peace organizations, etc.. The multi-racial team of trainers are men and women who are veterans of many broad-based movements for social justice for the past 20 years- civil rights, anti-war, welfare rights, farm workers, and Native Americans. All core trainers continue to do local organizing or community work. For more information contact, The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, 1444 N. Johnson St., New Orleans, Louisiana 70116, (504) 944-2354.

### Jewish Video Competition

The Judah L. Magnes Museum present the First Annual Jewish Video Competition for innovative use of video in socially conscious themes. The entry must be a VHS copy from a video original and must be postmarked by March 21, 1994. Please send a SASE by February 21, 1994 for an entry form and more information to; Video Competition, Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94705. □

## Magazine Reviews

*The Alarm* is a collectively produced eco-magazine that addresses Indigenous solidarity, wilderness protection, anti biotechnology, and anti-racist movements. The Autumn 93 issue features articles on James Bay, Earth Nights, regional, national, and international news. This highly creative and gutsy magazine is a must see! Subscriptions are \$10 for 4 issues. Write *Alarm*, P.O. Box 804, Burlington VT, 05402.

*Counter Information* is produced by an independent collective whose aim it is to assist in the struggle against all injustice, oppression and exploitation. This small publication is a great way to get uncensored news from Europe that addresses racism, militarism and the movement to resist injustice. For information on CI distribution and revolutionary activities in the North of England write to *Counter Information*, 52 Call Lane, Leeds LS1 6DT. For all other matters write *Counter Information*, Pigeonhole CI, 11 Fourth St., Edinburgh EH1, Scotland.

*The Dream Network, A Quarterly Journal Exploring Dreams and Myth*, invites articles, interviews, news items, photographs and artwork which will in some way, inspire, inform or otherwise encourage our readers to value their dreams. In 1984 we will be exploring Cross Cultural Perspectives on Dreams. Recommended are dream and myth related experimental articles, accounts of a personal/ transformative nature and/or educational information that will empower readers in learning to understand the symbolic and metaphoric language of dreams and mythology. Our writers and readers consist of lay people, students & professional dreamworkers. It is our goal to unite individuals who respect their dreams, to de-mystify dream work and to integrate dream sharing into our culture. For submission guidelines write: *Dream Network*, 1337 Powerhouse Lane Suite 22, Moab, UT 84532 (801) 259-5936 □

### WALK FOR JUSTICE 1994

American Indian Movement (AIM) founder Dennis J. Banks, and co-founder Mary Jane Wilson are leading a cross-America spiritual walk which began with a sunrise ceremony at Alcatraz, off the coast of San Francisco, on February 11, 1994, and will culminate in Washington D.C. on July 15th. basically following route 50 (with some deviations), the walk will pass through CA, NV, UT, CO, KS, MI, IL, IN, OH, WV, VI, and DC. Link walks and runs from Washington state, Santa Fe, Minnesota, Boston, Florida, Oklahoma, and northern Ohio will be joining the main group along the way. Participants will include walkers from the U.S. and abroad.

The purpose of the walk is to call attention to the 17 year prison ordeal of AIM member, Leonard Peltier. The marchers intend to collect signatures asking for Executive Clemency. On July 6, 1993, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals issued its final denial for a re-trial of the conviction handed

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down 17 years ago before an all white jury in North Dakota. On Dec. 14, 1993, Peltier's application for parole was denied, he may not reapply until 2008.

During his original trial Peltier was not allowed to use the self defense theory. He was denied exculpatory evidence which pointed to his innocence. This information was finally released under the freedom of Information Act seven years after his conviction. U.S. Prosecutor, Lynn Crook, accused Peltier of firing the bullets that killed the agents. 17 years later, on Nov. 9, 1993, Crook admitted to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals that, "we still don't know who killed the agents." For more information write the Walk for Justice, POB 315, Newport, KY 41071 (606) 581-9456

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